



**HOME BUILDERS & REMODELERS ASSOCIATION
OF CONNECTICUT, INC.**

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*Your Home
Is Our
Business*

March 11, 2014

To: Senator Gary A. Holder-Winfield, Co-Chairman
Representative Peter A. Tercyak, Co-Chairman
Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee

From: Bill Ethier, CAE, Chief Executive Officer

Re: **Raised Bill 5314, AAC Payments on Advances From the Federal
Unemployment Account**

The HBRA of Connecticut is a professional trade association with about nine hundred (900) member firms statewide employing tens of thousands of CT's citizens. Our members, all small businesses, are residential and commercial builders, land developers, remodelers, general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals that provide services to our diverse industry and to consumers. Our members build between 70% and 80% of all new homes and apartments in the state each year and perform countless home improvements.

The HBRA of Connecticut supports HB 5314. The housing industry is still struggling after seven (7) plus years of a Great Housing Depression. Permits in Connecticut are up only slightly from all-time record lows in 2011. While housing is improving, going in the right direction, it is painfully slow. We have a long way to go to get back to normal housing production levels. Many have left the industry, and many permanently. **The businesses that have survived and still operate in this industry need your help.**

While our association spends most of our time on a myriad of regulatory issues that daunt our industry, the multitude of taxes and fees our members face in Connecticut also crushes profits and the potential job growth we could bring to CT. Home building is a tremendous job production engine and the bedrock of a sound economy. **HB 5314 will provide an important measure of relief that we need.**

We are always first and foremost housing and home building policy advocates. We're many small businesses. We desperately need legislative leaders provide relief to businesses and adopt what is at its core a sound and logical proposal. Use a portion of the state's current surplus and remove the unemployment compensation special assessment that all businesses must pay. The removal of this special UC assessment will help improve the state's business climate. It is the right thing to do.

We urge you to support HB 5314.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.